TV channels for farmers

†2700. PROF. R.B.S. VARMA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have received proposals to launch a separate TV channel for farmers;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when Government would consider the proposals and approve them?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (c) Prasar Bharati, an autonomous corporation have informed that they are not considering any proposal at present to launch a separate TV channel for farmers. They have informed that Doordarshan is already telecasting agricultural programmes from select transmitters in narrowcasting mode.

Financial condition of Prasar Bharati

2701. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Prasar Bharati is in a very bad financial condition and a fear has been expressed that it may not be able to compete for telecast rights of some important sports events;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government have asked the Prasar Bharati to generate its own revenue for plan and non-plan expenditure;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the impact it would have on Prasar Bharati's ability to stay in the competition?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) Prasar Bharati, as a Public Broadcaster, has structural problems in terms of finance. This does not, however, mean it will not be able to compete for telecast rights for important sports events.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Prasar Bharati telecast Olympics of 2004 even while incurring a revenue loss of about Rs. 20 crores as part of its mandate.

(c) to (e) As per clause 6 of the 'Memorandum of Understanding' signed between the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and Prasar Bharati, the latter shall endeavour to augment its revenue earnings year after year, strengthen its mechanism of resource mobilization and take effective steps for optimally utilizing the available resources to progressively reduce its dependence on Grants-in-Aid from the Central Government. The MoU is intended to tone up the functioning of Prasar Bharati and not to weaken its capacity to compete the sports events.

Functioning of FM Channels

2702. SHRI S.P.M. SYED KHAN: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) how many FM channels are functioning in the country at present;

(b) the details of revenue earned by Government through these FM channels, State-wise;

(c) how many requests are pending with Government for starting new FM channels; and

(d) by when Government will take decision on those requests?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) All India Radio has 139 FM Radio Stations. Besides 21 private FM Channels and 7 Community Radio Stations are currently operational in the country.

(b) The Government has earned revenue in the form of license fee from private Broadcasters, the details of which are as under:

State	Revenue Earned (In lakhs)
Maharashtra	13716.707
Delhi	3776.235
West Bengal	553.332
Tamil Nadu	2941.133